

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**A STUDY ON STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON  
FACTORS LEADING TO ANXIETY: A  
COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO PROFICIENCY  
LEVELS**

**SUHAILA MUHAMAD**

**M. Ed. TESL**

**April 2009**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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### **Candidate's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

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## ABSTRACT

Anxiety has been identified by many as one of the affective domains that tamper with the learning of a Second Language. The factors leading to anxiety have been identified by numerous researchers of the past, most of which are accompanied with debilitating effects towards the language learning experienced by the learners. In this study, the factors leading to anxiety among the learners were investigated. In the past, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety had been named the most influential aspects in an English classroom that can contribute to the learners' apprehension, thus tampering with their language learning process (Horwitz et.al, 1986). For the purpose of this study, the factors suggested by Horwitz et.al (1986) were taken into consideration. In addition to that, the learners' perspectives on the matter were also taken into consideration. The study involved learners from two different proficiency levels – the highest and the lowest – and both quantitative and qualitative qualities were used for the data collection. Overall, 90 learners participated in the first part of data collection, which involved the use of SLCAS (Second Language Classroom Anxiety Scale), adapted from Horwitz et.al's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, and a total of eight were chosen for the interview. The data retrieved revealed that while the factors forwarded by Horwitz et.al (1986) were among the factors that lead to anxiety in the language classroom, the learners found teacher role to also be a contributing factor to their apprehensiveness in the language classroom. The study also revealed that while learners did feel the effects of anxiety in their language classroom, the apprehensiveness proved to be facilitative rather than debilitating, as the hurdles they faced were overcome, and used to be a push factor that helped boost their language learning process. As a mean to ease their apprehensiveness in the classroom, the learners maintained their need to feel a sense of community and the freedom to speak in the language classroom, with more group work and classroom discussions infused throughout their learning process.

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